

# Milk sellers milk consumers as Ramadan comes

**TAWFIQUE ALI**

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Retailers and distribution agents of Milk Vita have started fleecing the consumers with the Ramadan nearing, although the company has decided not to increase the price of its products, the most popular brand of packaged cow milk.

City dwellers have alleged that the shopkeepers have overpriced Milk Vita liquid milk by Tk 2 to 3 per pack of one litre, half litre and quarter litre.

Milk Vita is the trade name for dairy products manufactured by the Bangladesh Milk Producers Co-operative Union Limited (BMPCUL).

Adviser to the Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives ministry recently announced that the price of Milk Vita would not be increased this Ramadan.

As per rates fixed by the government-controlled company, retail price of per unit of one-litre milk is Tk 36, half litre Tk 19 and quarter litre Tk 11.

Monika Nahar, a housewife

from Modhubagh, said local grocers have been charging Tk 38 for per litre of Milk Vita milk for last one week.

Jalal Khan, a resident of Uttara sector-10, said local grocers started charging Tk 13 for a quarter-litre pack of Milk Vita around a week back.

"The shopkeeper said he has to pay more for Milk Vita ahead of Ramadan, when I asked why he charged more," said Khan.

Raihan Mahmud, a resident of Mirpur, said the shopkeepers charge more for quarter-litre pack as this small unit has high demand among the customers.

Altercation between consumers and shopkeepers over high price of liquid milk has been a regular phenomenon during Ramadan, Eid and Shab-e-Barat.

Retailers alleged that the milk van-pullers charge higher price before and during Ramadan. In case they refuse to pay extra money, they stop supply.

As the demand for milk is high during Ramadan, the van drivers sell it to anybody in case

any grocer refuses to buy from them at a higher price.

This correspondent appeared as a customer of Milk Vita at a shop in Gulshan-1 DCC Market on September 5. The shopkeeper asked for Tk 38 for per litre of Milk Vita.

Asked why he charged more than the normal rate, he said, "I have increased the price of Milk Vita as other brands have already increased price of liquid milk."

Abdul Muhit, manager (marketing) of Milk Vita, attributed the situation to the difference between high demand and less supply.

"We too are receiving complaints of price manipulation at the consumer level," he said.

The facts that demand for Milk Vita goes doubly high during Ramadan and the retailers tend to stockpile the product are also behind the price manipulation, he said.

"We have asked our supervisors to monitor the market strictly. Besides, we have introduced cash memo to prevent

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Encroachment going on steadily on the Rupnagar Lake in Mirpur area. The government in several drives recently dismantled many such illegal structures and slums to recover water bodies from the grip of encroachers. But whenever the drive dies out, the grabbers get back 'freely' to those places.

# Sanjay and Shohag finally break out of the rut

**SHAHNAZ PARVEEN**

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Days in the cage at Dhaka zoo are over for Sanjay and Shohag as they are moving to their new home at Dulahazra Wildlife Safari Park.

The curator looked relieved as the zoo could send the tiger and the lion to a semi-natural habitat, which is definitely a heaven compared to the space and environment they had in Dhaka zoo in Mirpur.

"We have more tigers and lions than we need for the zoo. The safari park authority requested in April this year and we agreed to send them. The necessary papers have been approved by the ministry in August", said Kazi Fazlul Haque, the curator of Dhaka zoo.

"At first they wanted one pair of each species. Later because of fund constraints, it was decided that they would take one from each species for now", he added.

Around eight years old, Sanjay and Shohag, both male, were born in captivity at the zoo.

Currently Dhaka zoo has 19 lions and 9 adult tigers. On May 4 this year, one of the tigresses named Promila gave birth to triplets, increasing the

number to 12.

The zoo has 10 cages for lions while the tigers live in 6 cages. The baby tigers are still living with their mother. The curator of the zoo said that three pairs from each species is enough for display.

Veterinary surgeon of the Dulahazra park Dr Zahed Md Malekul told Star City that both Sanjay and Shohag will be tranquillised and a truck will carry

them in cages to the safari park. Dr Malekul will accompany the two in their trip to the safari park.

Dr Malekul informed that all the tigers and lions currently living in various zoos of the country were born in Dhaka zoo.

"Immune system of the majority of the tigers and lions at the zoo is weakening slowly as they were born in captivity and still living in captive condition", he pointed out.



STAR PHOTO



Dulahazra Safari Park, the next destination of Sanjay and Shohag.

# Medians dying for care

**RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR**

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Lack of proper maintenance and preservation measures has left city roads and intersections with nothing but a shadow of the beautification done over the last few years.

In a bid to give a facelift to the city streets, Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) initiated the massive road beautification programme in 2005 with the participation of 73 private and public organisations before the 2005 Saarc Summit.

The beautification campaign left the city's boulevards cleaner, greener and sparkling with splendours. But due to negligence from the authorities concerned, most of the streets, medians, road islands and pavements are now in a woeful state.

"The whole city went through an extraordinary change within a week when they first started to beautify the streets. Everything looked so beautiful that it gave us a rare sense of delight to be a part of the city," said Manjarul Islam, an architect from Dhanmondi.

"But now it seems they (authorities) consider their job done after beautifying the streets. They have forgotten the need of maintenance," he added.

According to DCC officials, around 70 percent of the beautified street sections are in a bad shape, 20 percent are passable and only 10 percent are in good condition.

Negligence from the organisations concerned played a big role in the current lacklustre state of the street beautification programme. A number of the private organisations that volunteered for the beautification project later tried to relinquish their responsibilities of maintaining the street sections allotted to them, DCC sources said.

Worn out plants taken over by wild growth of grass, scattered piles of trash and debris, missing or damaged slabs with cracks, along with camps of floating beggars and alike represent the woeful state of the city medians and pavements.

Most of the decorative plants that attracted the eyes of city dwellers only a few months ago have mostly decayed and others taken over by feet long grass and other wild plants.

A classic example of lack of maintenance would be the pavement near the House Building intersection in Uttara.

The decorative plants on the pavement have faded away, only to be taken over by large cracks and broken slabs.

Mohammad Shahid Hasan, the local ward commissioner told this correspondent that the DCC authorities have been notified about the current state of the street and he is waiting

The plants on the streets in Segunbagicha ad Topkhana have died out. The only foliage visible in the street medians of this region are the occasional patches of feet long grass along with the odd wild plants. Some places are littered with trash.

The street garden beside the

Elephant Road Bata signal have little sign of the decorative plants. The median has now been covered by wild plants. Local shop owners said they have never seen anyone water the decorative plants.

The once striking street fountain on Manik Mia Avenue has taken a different look due



Dead trees adorn the median at Rampura Road.

for a response.

Similar scenes were seen on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Asad Avenue, and near Science Laboratory, Mouchak Market and the foot over-bridge in Kakoli. Street islands and pavements in these places reflect

Jahangir Gate of Dhaka Cantonment was seen full of long grass. The street median beside the Rangs Shababan is in similar state.

Beautification of the Mirpur Road near Dhaka City College falls under the responsibility of

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little or no maintenance.

Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue has been left with no signs of the colourful plants that were planted in the street median. Instead, the median is seen broken in a number of places thanks to mindless road digging by utility service providers.

Labaid Hospital. The rowdy growth of grass and the dusty plants in this street indicate little maintenance and care from the authorities. Asked, officials from the Labaid Hospital blamed Wasa for not providing water for the street plants.

The street stretching from the Baitul Mamur Mosque to